

Identifying marine pelagic ecosystem management objectives and indicators - DTU Orbit (09/11/2017)

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International policy frameworks such as the Common Fisheries Policy and the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive define high-level strategic goals for marine ecosystems. Strategic goals are addressed via general and operational management objectives. To add credibility and legitimacy to the development of objectives, for this study stakeholders explored intermediate level ecological, economic and social management objectives for Northeast Atlantic pelagic ecosystems. Stakeholder workshops were undertaken with participants being free to identify objectives based on their own insights and needs. Overall 26 objectives were proposed, with 58% agreement in proposed objectives between two workshops. Based on published evidence for pressure-state links, examples of operational objectives and suitable indicators for each of the 26 objectives were then selected. It is argued that given the strong species-specific links of pelagic species with the environment and the large geographic scale of their life cycles, which contrast to demersal systems, pelagic indicators are needed at the level of species (or stocks) independent of legislative region. Pelagic community indicators may be set at regional scale in some cases. In the evidence-based approach used in this study, the selection of species or region specific operational objectives and indicators was based on demonstrated pressure-state links. Hence observed changes in indicators can reliably inform on appropriate management measures. (C) 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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Authors: Trenkel, V. M. (Ekstern), Hintzen, N. T. (Ekstern), Farnsworth, K. D. (Ekstern), Olesen, C. (Ekstern), Reid, D. (Ekstern), Rindorf, A. (Intern), Shephard, S. (Ekstern), Dickey-Collas, M. (Ekstern)

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